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S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 001596

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DIPLOMATIC SECURITY  
FRANCIS X. TAYLOR FROM AMBASSADOR  
ALSO FOR, DS/DSS, DS/DSS/IP, DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, AF/E, OBO/NEC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ABLD](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI: SECURITY CONCERNS AT POST

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA RAGSDALE,  
for reason 1.4 (D) and (G)

[1](#)1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE, SEE PARAGRAPH 7.

[1](#)2. (C) Since the inception of the U.S. Military's base (Camp Lemonier) in 2002, Djibouti has gained international notoriety as a staunch supporter of the Global War on Terror. Although the arrival of the U.S. Military has brought with it several tangential benefits, including increased economic assistance primarily for education, health and infrastructure development, it has also brought with it a greater threat of terrorism from trans-national terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al Ittihad Al-Islami (AIAI.)

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy Djibouti has worked diligently to monitor, report and mitigate the constant threat stream from the region in an effort to prevent another Nairobi or Dar es Salaam, or more recently, a Jeddah incident. Our efforts have resulted in improved physical security and procedural awareness for security purposes, but the reality remains that we are far from being well protected.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) RSO Djibouti continues to work closely with Host nation police and U.S. Military personnel to provide an adequate response mechanism for the Mission in a crisis situation. Unfortunately, Host Nation Police are inadequately trained, poorly equipped and highly unmotivated for such a task. RSO is consistently addressing issues of reliability and procedures with Police leadership, but complacency, cultural challenges and extreme weather conditions all result in an ineffective first line of defense. Camp Lemonier is fifteen minutes away by road and a contingent of Marines stand ready to assist the Mission, but the measure will only be effective as a reaction to an already devastating event. We firmly believe that if an incident should occur, with a method of operation similar or parallel to what took place at Consulate General, Jeddah, the Djibouti Mission would suffer greater American and LES casualties.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) Djibouti remains a critical threat Post for trans-national terrorism and continues to receive threat information on a daily basis. The compilation of information indicates, unequivocally, the potential for an attack to be carried out against the Mission and/or Camp Lemonier. This is an impending threat that cannot be ignored. The Camp continues to harden its perimeter, security procedures and internal structures and although the Embassy has made several improvements, it remains the softer and more attractive target for terrorists.

[1](#)6. (S/NF) Our Mission has tripled in personnel since 2002. Existing postage-stamp facilities on the Embassy compound are no longer adequate to provide a secure work place for American USG Officers and Locally Engaged Staff (LES) commensurate with the threat environment. Office spaces, for Americans and LES, are spread throughout the compound over four buildings outside the Chancery the majority of which do not meet Forced Entry Ballistic Resistant Standards (FEBR.) Security features on these buildings have been improved, but can easily be defeated by a well trained and equipped terrorist or terrorist group.

[1](#)7. (C) A solution to the security dilemma we face is certainly to expedite development of the New Embassy Compound (NEC) destined to break ground in 2007 with an estimated completion date of 2010. A purchase agreement for a NEC site was signed November 24, 2004 with the government of Djibouti. The NEC will provide adequate and secure facilities needed to protect personnel in accordance with USG standards. In the interim, I request that the Department deploy a team urgently to Djibouti to assess construction needs and cost for necessary and essential security upgrades for Embassy Djibouti with a view toward implementing these upgrades on an urgent basis. Post's last technical and physical security upgrade was completed almost 5 years ago and many of the systems in place are now deficient or obsolete. Post cannot handle any field expedient upgrades that are mandated given our limited budget and lack of technical expertise.

18. (U) I am confident that you will provide a positive and quick response to this request.

19. (U) My POC, for security, is RSO Marc Ramos at 253-35-39-95 or 253-35-26-73 (secure).  
RAGSDALE